(d) if so, the details thereof along with status of the proposed?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (d) The suggestions in the Memorandum submitted by Government of Orissa included setting up of a research station by Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) in Kandhamal district of Orissa to study the problem of quality of the spices grown in the district and setting up a branch of Spices Board to provide market intelligence to the farmers and to market the spices.

In order to help farmers to get remunerative prices for their agricultural produce, Government of India announces in each season Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for major agricultural commodities like paddy, wheat, oilseeds etc. and organizes purchase operations through public and cooperative agencies. A Market Intervention Scheme is in operation to be implemented on the request of State/U.T Government for procurement of agriculture and horticulture commodities generally perishable in nature and not covered under MSP, to protect the farmers from making distress sales in the event of fall in prices below economic level/cost of production.

In order to facilitate better price realization by the farmers through improved marketing opportunities, Government has taken a number of initiatives to implement market reforms in agriculture.

The Spices Board collects and publishes the domestic and international prices of spices on a weekly basis. Suggestion to set up a branch office of Spices Board in Kandhamal district was not found feasible by the Board.

As regards the suggestion to set up an ICAR research station in the district of Kandhamal, it was not found feasible by ICAR in view of the existing facilities available in Orissa for research on spices.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

552. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the spread of demand for organic food items in the country;

(b) if so, the status of the existing demand, supply, consumption and production of the organic food products in the country; and

(c) Government's plans and projections, if any, for the coming years in respect of this improved variety of food products?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As per a survey conducted by International Competence Centre of Organic Agriculture (ICCOA), a Bangalore-based private NGO, the total market potential of organic foods is about Rs.2300 crore.

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